

Session 14

Server was down so this one is up late. There may be errors or missing names since I wasn't able to reference previous sessions.

In the silence after the battle people bustle around, making sure that the two who fled really stayed away and taking initial inventory. Oliga, who was lured away at the start, came back and slowly walked into the camp with her hands up and sat at the fire. Stella is also at the fire on another log, staring deeply into the fire. Treasa is level-headed after the fight and goes to stand watch, moving just outside the firelight with her back to one of the buildings with the head of her axe on the ground between her feet and her hands resting on the haft. Rua goes up to her and asks "So what now? Do I like cut something off their body? or take some teeth?". "Well," Treasa responds slowly, "Some people do take trophies, some people don't. Do you want to?" Rua shakes his head and says "No, that feels gross." He then goes to the fire and tries to strike up a conversation with her, asking if she is one of the good bandits. Oliga chuckles darkly and says there are worse out there.

After walking into the cookhouse Soren quickly steps out of view of the door, leans his back against the wall and slowly slides down, clutching his arms around his legs and starts sobbing quietly.

Esme has been looking around the camp for any Problems with her mind on the morale of the group. She notices that Soren, who is often telling stories and lightening the mood, is conspicuously absent. She goes to the cookhouse and upon seeing him sitting against the wall she moves to sit beside him in silence. Soren acknowledges her presence with a look and after sitting in silence for a moment speaks softly "It was too easy. One moment he was sitting there smoking his pipe, and the next he was dead. Maybe I would feel better if I fought them directly? I don't know, but it was too damn easy to kill them." Esme response, saying "It is easy, and that is why we have to make it hard in other ways." She spends some more time comforting him, talking about how he could spin the story about this adventure into one about why were there and what they were protecting. Then she directs him to start counting the loot while she goes out and deals with the bodies. She recruits the hunters and they strip the bodies of anything useful and drap them into the ditch on the east of camp, grabbing some tools and filling it in with dirt to cover them, and she begins soing their last rites.

Rua is still trying to draw Oliga into conversation when Stella suddenly consecrates the fire, casts an invocation on it causing it to change hue from cherry red to golden yellow, with coronal loops projecting from the burning logs. She reaches forward and takes a burning brand in hand, stands and walks west out of the camp without saying anything. Seeing her go, Rua cuts off his conversation with Oliga saying he has to check on her. He follows her out of the camp, asking what she is doing but she doesn't respond immediately. Instead he walks with her some ways outside of the camp before she climbs up a small ridge and sits at the top. Rua sits next to her and asks why

she left the camp. She replies that she was getting sick from the smell of blood and needed to get away, and that she doesn't feel like she belongs being around such violence. Rua sympathizes, sharing that he also feels out of place. Him coming along with the whole journey was probably a mistake, but sometimes we do reckless things. Rua playfully punches Stella's shoulder and smiles at her. She starts for a moment, stares at him then slowly returns the smile. At this time a soft blue light shines out through the trees. Rua asks Stella if she sees it as well and she does, and after a moment Rua says they should get back to camp.

Borshu wanders around for a bit, then gets into a whispered conversation with Oliga for a moment. When that is done he looks around and asks who is in charge? Soren steps out of the cookhouse, looking around and not seeing Esme speaks up and says "Me." Borshu says "Right, well are we gonna be hanged or what? If I am to face the gallows I would like to know." Soren replies "We have no plans to kill them, Grumman spoke for you and Oliga and he has been true to his word. We will probably ask for your help moving the stuff out of the camp, but as long as you don't try to stab us in the back we won't be killing you. But I am keeping an eye on you, if you try to backstab us I will know." Treasa is watching this exchange, looking keenly at the ex-bandits and can tell that they are not hiding their intentions. At this point Stella and Rua come back to the camp and tell the others about the ghostly blue light they saw. Esme also finishes the rites for the bandits and returns to the fire. Borshu speaks up saying yeah its ghosts, they noticed them around a few times and have just let them be. They haven't been any trouble.

The group then starts to discuss what their next move will be. It is decided early that they should go after Bogden and make sure this dirty business is done completely. The debate about what to do about all the supplies, but it is eventually decided that they will split the group. The hunters with Stella, Kiva, Grumman, Oliga, and Borshu will take the supplies and sheep and slowly make their way back to Stonetop while Treasa, Esme, Rua, Soren, and Willem pursue the riders to Hanson's Hill. Plan decided, they set a watch and each head to bed. Soren doesn't feel like its right to sleep in the dead people's beds so sleeps in the stable. Treasa sleeps in the light of the campfire.

In the morning the combat group gears up and heads out the west entrance of the camp, following the trail the horses have made. Soren draws on his lessons with Fio to follow the trail, through the soft ground of the hills it is easy to follow but sections of stony ground force him to make a guess and search for the trail on the other side. As they leave the hills towards the river the trail becomes more obvious as the ground is soft and marshy. They are able to cross at the ford with relative ease compared to their first crossing. On the other side Rua points out a curl of smoke from a campfire, that is most likely Bogden's camp. A very short discussion has the group agreeing to finish things tonight and move to sneak towards their fire. They move slowly and quietly, approaching the camp with little noise.

Back at the encampment, the group left behind begins packing things up with Oliga stacking piles of kindling around the buildings with a certain relish. The people remaining look to Stella for guidance and she simply states "Lets get everything we can carry and go." After everything is packed up Stella pours oil over the piles of kindling that Oliga set then walks up to one of the cabins and whispers "Be cleansed" to the pile of wood. She can feel that the wood is almost wanting to burn and at her slightest word they burst into flame. She turns her back on the fire and

shoulders her pack and moves with the others to leave the camp as a roiling black smoke starts to rise above the old encampment. It is a miserable trek, each person is loaded to their absolute limit with as much piled onto the sheep as well. None of the group are experienced shepherds and wrangling the sheep to all go in the same direction slows them down even further. They make it to the river as the sun goes down, all feeling their burdens twice over after a full days trek. Fio takes Stella aside and talks to her about potential routes back to Stonetop. They could go straight through the grasses back the way they came, but the sheep may be more of a problem, they are easy to lose in the grass. Alternatively they could go south and hit the maker's road and take that route. Stella asks about the possibility of Bogden seeing the smoke from the fire they set. Fio bites her lip and scans the horizon then says the smoke is already hard to see in the clouds, if they are on horses they will be even farther away. I doubt they saw it, and if they do come back they will run into the other group first. Stella falls silent for a moment and then says "Highway, lets take the highway." Fio nods and says once they get to the road it will be a couple days to get back to Stonetop.

End of Session!

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